

STATEMENT OF ROBERT W. MCINTOSH, ASSOCIATE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS, NORTHEAST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE, AT AN OVERSIGHT HEARING CONCERNING THE NATIONAL PARKS: PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITES AND THE NORTHEAST REGION.

August 24, 2005

Mr. Chairman, permit me to welcome you back to the Northeast and thank the committee for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the many facets and initiatives of the Northeast Region of the National Park Service. I am here with Michael Creasey, Superintendent of the Lowell National Historical Park and Chair of the Granite Subcluster that includes all of the parks in Massachusetts, who will be available to help answer specific questions about local parks. First, on behalf of the National Park Service, I would like to acknowledge and thank Congress for its continuing support of our parks and programs here in the Northeast, as well as the entire National Park System.

This is indeed the region “Where a Country was Born and a Nation Came of Age.” It is a challenging place because of its complexity, but the National Park Service has been a leader in natural and cultural resource preservation and providing myriad opportunities for public enjoyment. We are very proud of the work we do in carrying out the mission of the National Park Service and the work of our many partners who contribute so much to resource protection, heritage development, and education. My testimony today will provide you with an overview of the region and also focus on the work of parks here in New England.

The Northeast Region comprises a land area of 238,000 square miles over 13 states from Maine to Virginia with a diverse population of 68,600,000 persons - 24% of the nation’s population. It is characterized by an urban/suburban and rural mix of landscapes with an overall population density of 288 persons per square mile contrasted to the national density of 80 persons per square mile. The National Park System here in the Northeast serves close to 51.25 million annual visitors (18% of the total national visitation of 276.9 million in 2004), and provides assistance to our many partners who manage significant sites and programs that preserve and interpret the natural and cultural resources in the region.

The Region contains 75 park units, over 25 affiliated or related areas including 14 National Heritage Areas, ¼ of all National Park System museum collections, ¼ of all the historic structures, and almost ½ (1,086 of 2,500) of the nation’s National Historic Landmarks (NHL). We are known for developing effective park partnerships, managing cultural resources, supporting strong partnerships with NHLs, providing assistance to 14 National Heritage Areas, implementing effective Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance projects with community partners, and providing leadership in education and

civic engagement. We have made major strides in management accountability, security for our icon parks, effective budgeting tools, and other initiatives that I will discuss.

In the Northeast Region of the National Park Service our management priorities are clear and unambiguous: Efficient and effective operations; effective customer service; open and clear internal and external communications; employee involvement and buy-in as we pursue our goals; partnering with public, private and nonprofit entities; and cooperation both internally and externally.

We are also at the forefront in responding to National Park Service Legacy Goals, which call for management excellence, outdoor recreation, conservation, sustainability, and 21st Century relevance. Our 4,000 employees are committed to management effectiveness and efficiency, providing the highest quality visitor services, and protection of the resources under our stewardship. We share these commitments with our many valuable volunteers who provided over 825,000 volunteer hours in 2004.

Funding

I would like to thank Congress for providing steady increases in park operating funds for our national parks. For FY 2005, the Northeast Region's budget is \$261.20 million of which \$230 million is Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) and project funds as follows: \$8.3 million for cyclic maintenance; \$10.2 million for repair/rehab; \$2.1 million for cultural resources; \$1.4 million for natural resources; \$1.5 million for collections management; and \$7.7 million in other project funds. The recently signed FY 2006 appropriation bill will increase our parks' financial capabilities and assist in meeting the President's goals to address the deferred maintenance backlog. The ONPS amount of \$230 million includes the congressionally authorized base increase for parks of 4% in FY 2005. The FY 2006 act provides a net increase of 3.1% for ONPS after the across-the-board reduction, including a 2.4% increase for fixed costs, a 1.5% across-the-board increase for parks, and \$5 million in park base programmatic increases.

We also rely on other funding sources, such as recreation fees, to carry out our mission. Here in New England, our parks have particularly benefited from the use of recreation fees in FY 2004 and 2005. At Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, portions from the \$120,000 total in recreation fees were used to rehabilitate trails, campsites, and buildings on harbor islands. The work was done by youths in the Boston area. At Cape Cod National Seashore, the \$1,723,000 in total recreation fees enabled the park to make beach and park improvements and provide for visitor safety. At Lowell National Historical Park, \$417,950 in recreation fees contributed to rehabilitating and upgrading the park's radio system, visitor and employee safety measures, and conservation of visitor walkways and landscape along historic canals and the Merrimack River. At Acadia National Park, the recreation fees have funded over \$10 million dollars of critical projects related to visitor services, resource protection and maintenance since its establishment in 1997. Notable accomplishments include development and operation of the Island Explorer transit system; rehabilitation of trails, roads, restrooms, ranger stations, visitor center and wayside exhibits, and numerous other visitor facilities; conservation of

museum objects; and restoration of disturbed sites. The partnership between the Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park is central to the success of the transit system, carriage road, and trail system projects.

Historic Preservation

This region has one of the nation's most important collections of historical parks and cultural resources. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were forged in Philadelphia. The first shots of the Revolutionary War were heard a short distance from here and we protect and celebrate the resources and stories of that era in this great hall, at Paul Revere's home, at the Old North Church, at the Adams Homestead in Quincy (along with John F. Kennedy Birthplace, our two presidential sites in New England) and at Minute Man National Historical Park in Concord. All of these sites are reachable by mass transit from downtown Boston. Historic preservation is a core of this region's mission and we have many successes to build upon into the future.

Minute Man is completing a major historic preservation and backlog maintenance project in the park's North Bridge Unit including restoration of the North Bridge, rehabilitation of the historic landscape, resurfacing of historic pathways, restoration of the base and steps of Daniel Chester French's "Minute Man Statue" and for the restoration of the 1836 obelisk commemorating the opening battle of the American Revolution. This project has protected resources and greatly improved visitor experience and enjoyment for the park's 1.2 million annual visitors.

Recently, a major multi-million dollar effort was undertaken to "create" the park in the Battle Road Unit - the park's largest. Until this project was completed, the Battle Road Unit, the route of Paul Revere's ride and the line of retreat for the British, was essentially inaccessible, unutilized and unrecognized as a national historical park. Today, it is well-used by visitors with interpretive waysides. Additionally, the park has successfully rehabilitated seven historic structures that witnessed the events of 1776 and rehabilitated acres of historic farmland and associated stone walls.

Longfellow National Historic Site has joined forces with the Friends of Longfellow House and the community to recover its rich and diverse historic landscape and return it to its former glory. A capital campaign completed by the Friends in 2005 raised \$800,000 in public and private donations for the landscape. Rehabilitation of the formal garden and house forecourt is under way including replacement of hundreds of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. Historic features such as a dramatic garden pergola missing since the 1930s and fences, paths, and a driveway have been reconfigured or replaced. Visitors will also benefit from new directional signs and lighting in the landscape. Longfellow National Historic Site was one of the first official projects of the Save America's Treasures initiative. Many invaluable objects and furnishings dating from the late 18th-early 20th centuries have been conserved.

In the spring of 2004, Faneuil Hall, Boston's "Cradle of Liberty," and the nearby Old State House, according to Harrison Gray Otis, the "Temple of Liberty," underwent a

meticulous renovation that included painting of all exterior architectural wood and stone, metal railings, fencing and hardware; and stripping and re-gold-leafing of the domes of the roof cupolas. At the Navy Yard, contracts will shortly be let for the rehabilitation of Building 125, the Historic Paint Shop, and the Commandant's House. In 2005, Boston broke ground on restoring the 221-foot tall Bunker Hill Monument to its position as one of the city's most recognized historic landmarks on Boston's Freedom Trail.

Acadia National Park has completed or is in the process of completing several major projects involving properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These include complete rehabilitation of the two park campgrounds originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps; rehabilitation of the highly crafted trail system, most of which predates the 1916 park establishment; and rehabilitation of all the John D. Rockefeller Jr. constructed carriage road bridges. Once again, the Friends of Acadia continue to play an invaluable role.

Maintenance Backlog

The Northeast Region is making steady progress on the President's priority of addressing the maintenance backlog, both in terms of devoting more funding to maintenance and in better managing our assets. Under NPS's systemwide comprehensive asset management strategy, the region has been able, for the first time ever, to inventory our assets and measure the condition of our facilities. The region contains 6,814 standard assets (buildings, housing, campgrounds, trails, paved and unpaved roads, and water and wastewater systems) - 16% of the total assets of the National Park System. The actual square footage of our buildings is over 1/3 of the system's total. The region has completed comprehensive condition assessments at 64 of our 75 parks. Given what they are, many assets managed by this region are priceless and irreplaceable – and on-going maintenance is critical for their preservation. We have been targeting our cyclic maintenance, repair/rehabilitation, about 2/3 of line item construction appropriations, and recreation fees to address this issue. Between 2002 and 2005, available appropriated funds to address the maintenance backlog in the Northeast amounted to close to \$119 million. Planned preventive maintenance for our assets is a regional priority.

Many of the maintenance projects serve also to preserve historic resources at our parks. At Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Vermont, funding from the repair/rehabilitation program has enabled the park to undertake a \$1.085 million multi-year initiative to install fire suppression systems in five park structures, protecting both the historic buildings and their extensive museum collections from catastrophic loss due to fire. This is a major preservation undertaking, which began in FY 2001 and included fire protection for the 1805 Mansion, a National Historic Landmark. The building contains more than 14,000 original museum objects, furnishings and books collected by three prominent American families, including paintings of many of America's greatest 19th century landscape artists.

The region is investing almost \$5.5 million in a major rehabilitation of the Corson Building at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. At Frederick Law Olmsted

National Historic Site, life and safety systems are being upgraded and the home and studio are being rehabilitated with close to \$2 million in line item construction funds. Funding of \$660,000 is resulting in the stabilization and rehabilitation of the interior of the historic railroad terminal at Lowell National Historical Park.

At Acadia National Park, more than \$22 million dollars have been dedicated to the park's maintenance projects over the past five years.

Homeland Security

Since September 11, 2001, the Northeast Region has received over \$11 million from ONPS and line item construction accounts directed towards enhanced security and protection of our visitors, primarily at our icon parks. In 2003, Boston National Historical Park received a permanent base operating increase of \$1.2 million for enhanced security. Line item construction funds for emergency preparedness have also been approved at a cost of almost \$3.7 million. Of this amount, Boston received \$670,000. Federal Hall received an additional \$16.82 million for emergency recovery and major rehabilitation after September 11, 2001. We will continue to direct funds to protect our icon parks and visitors here in the Northeast.

Transportation

The Northeast Region has been very successful in attracting Federal Lands Highway Program and Alternative Transportation Program funding for our parks, approximately \$10 million annually. Our premier transportation attraction is the highly successful Island Explorer at Acadia. While we have not yet determined the full impact of the recently enacted transportation bill, we believe that projects contained in the legislation will assist our parks, our partners, and most importantly, provide additional enjoyment for our visitors in the coming years.

Management Initiatives

Our achievements in the Northeast are largely due to our application of advanced management strategies in our parks and the regional office. We developed, initiated, and are continually refining the Budget Cost Project Tool (BCP), which attempts to provide future financial information to park management, the region, and our Washington office. The BCP has been adopted for use by the National Park Service in its nationwide program of core operating analysis. This process ensures that funds are spent wisely on the most important park priorities. Guiding our investment decisions are asset management tools including the Facilities Management Software System, Asset Priority Index, the Facilities Condition Index, and the Choosing By Advantages process in setting regional and national priorities. We are implementing CORE Operations Analysis at the regional office and at two pilot parks – Shenandoah National Park and Valley Forge National Historical Park.

The region is also pursuing Preliminary Planning Efforts, in accordance with OMB Circular A-76, Attachment B, at The National Parks of New York Harbor, which consists of Gateway National Recreation Area, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Manhattan Sites, and Governor's Island National Monument. These parks have completed Performance Work Statements for all facility and maintenance functions, and are currently in the Most Efficient Organization (MEO) phase of the Preliminary Planning Effort. The results of this process will be provided to the Director of the National Park Service this fall. A decision will then be made to implement the Most Efficient Organization or proceed with the formal competitive process. Boston National Historical Park is scheduled to begin the Preliminary Planning Effort this month.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, we have attempted to give you a flavor of our work and its results, as well as examples of the progress we have made in some of our New England parks. We appreciate your continued interest in the National Park Service. We hope you will have many opportunities to enjoy the parks of the Northeast Region. That concludes my testimony. Mr. Creasey and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have today.